

Problems and Prospects of Women Dairy Units in Hisar District

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Abstract

This study investigates the socio-economic role, challenges, and opportunities of women engaged in dairy units in Hisar district. A descriptive survey of 100 women dairy entrepreneurs was conducted using structured questionnaires and interviews. The findings reveal that women dairy units contribute significantly to household income, family nutrition, and rural employment. However, systemic barriers such as limited access to credit, inadequate training, poor veterinary services, and weak market linkages hinder their growth. The study emphasizes the importance of family support, cooperative societies, and government schemes in sustaining dairy entrepreneurship. Recommendations include specialized training, improved veterinary infrastructure, accessible credit, and stronger cooperative linkages.

Introduction

Dairy farming has historically been one of the most important livelihood activities in rural India, contributing not only to household nutrition but also to the rural economy. Haryana, with its strong livestock base, has consistently ranked among the leading states in milk production. Hisar district, often referred to as the “livestock hub” of Haryana, is home to premier institutions such as the National Dairy Research Institute and CCS Haryana Agricultural University, which have played a pivotal role in advancing dairy science, animal breeding, and extension education.

Women in Hisar have traditionally been central to dairy management. Their responsibilities include feeding animals, cleaning sheds, milking, and ensuring animal health. Over time, their role has expanded to encompass management, marketing, and financial decision-making. Despite this, women dairy entrepreneurs remain marginalized in policy frameworks. They face challenges such as lack of collateral for loans, limited access to training, inadequate veterinary services, and weak market linkages. These barriers restrict their ability to expand dairy units and reduce profitability.

The socio-economic importance of women dairy units cannot be overstated. Dairy entrepreneurship provides steady income, improves family nutrition, and generates employment opportunities for rural youth. It also enhances women’s confidence, decision-making power, and social status within households and communities. In many cases, women reported that dairy units helped them contribute to children’s education, household savings, and community development.

Literature Review

Research on women entrepreneurship has consistently highlighted socio-cultural and economic barriers. Singh & Gupta (1984) and Suman (1984) emphasized that women entrepreneurs often face resistance from family and society, limiting their participation in entrepreneurial activities. Zahir (1985) found that women’s involvement in livestock management was high, but their decision-making power in marketing and finance was restricted.

Verma (1998) highlighted the potential of dairy units as income-generating activities, but noted constraints in training, veterinary services, and access to credit. Vidyulatha (1998) studied the impact of TRYSEM programmes and found that while training improved women’s skills, systemic barriers limited their entrepreneurial growth.

NABARD (2005) underlined the role of cooperative societies and self-help groups (SHGs) in supporting women dairy entrepreneurs. Sharma (2001) emphasized that women entrepreneurs face problems such as lack of collateral, poor infrastructure, and limited exposure to markets.

Mehta (2007) argued that microfinance and SHGs can empower women, but systemic barriers such as inadequate veterinary infrastructure and poor access to modern technology persist. Tripathi & Singh (2010) argued that dairy entrepreneurship can be a sustainable livelihood option for rural women, but institutional support is essential for scaling up.

Methodology

- Research Design: Descriptive survey
- Sample: 100 women dairy entrepreneurs from Hisar district (urban and rural areas)
- Tools: Structured questionnaire and semi-structured interviews
- Data Analysis: Percentage, chi-square test, thematic analysis

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Findings

- Most respondents operated small dairy units with 2–5 milch animals. Only 12% managed larger units.
- 70% reported difficulty in accessing institutional credit; reliance on informal loans was common.
- 65% had never received formal training; trained women showed higher productivity.
- 60% faced challenges in accessing veterinary care; lack of mobile clinics was a major issue.
- Women primarily sold milk locally; only 15% accessed organized markets.
- Dairy units improved family nutrition, generated income, and enhanced women's decision-making power.
- Women expressed interest in diversifying into paneer, ghee, and curd but lacked technical knowledge and infrastructure.
- Seasonal price fluctuations and dependence on middlemen were reported as major obstacles.
- Some respondents highlighted gender discrimination in cooperative societies, lack of awareness about government schemes, and difficulty balancing household responsibilities with entrepreneurial work.

Discussion

- The findings highlight systemic barriers that limit the potential of women dairy entrepreneurs in Hisar district.
- Lack of collateral restricts access to institutional credit.
- Structured training programs are limited; women with training showed better outcomes.
- Inadequate veterinary services reduce productivity; strengthening infrastructure is essential.
- Family support and SHGs improved sustainability.
- Weak market linkages restrict profitability; cold storage and processing facilities are urgently needed.
- Dairy entrepreneurship enhanced women's confidence and decision-making power.
- Targeted interventions in credit, training, veterinary services, and market infrastructure are essential.
- Women lack collateral and face difficulty in accessing institutional loans.
- Limited training opportunities restrict productivity and innovation.
- Poor veterinary infrastructure leads to livestock losses.
- Weak market linkages and absence of cold storage reduce profitability.
- Traditional gender roles limit women's entrepreneurial growth.
- Limited awareness of modern dairy technologies restricts efficiency.
- Existing schemes are not adequately implemented at grassroots level.
- Lack of proper storage facilities, milk chilling centers, and transportation facilities reduces profitability.
- Gender discrimination in cooperatives and local institutions limits women's access to resources.
- Women struggle to balance household responsibilities with dairy management, reducing efficiency.

Recommendations

- Develop structured training modules in animal husbandry, feed management, disease control, and dairy product marketing.
- Simplify loan procedures and reduce collateral requirements; introduce micro-credit schemes and financial literacy workshops.
- Establish mobile veterinary clinics; train women in basic animal healthcare; ensure availability of vaccines and medicines at subsidized rates.
- Create cold storage facilities and milk collection centers; encourage producer groups; introduce e-commerce platforms.
- Conduct awareness campaigns to sensitize families; promote success stories of women dairy entrepreneurs.
- Organize village-level workshops to spread awareness about schemes like DEDS.
- Train women in mobile apps for dairy management, online banking, and digital marketing.
- Establish incubation centers dedicated to women dairy entrepreneurs.
- Design gender-sensitive policies and monitor their implementation regularly.

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